



THE SCROLLS

Helping one another mature so we can impact our world for Christ

Christ: Before All Things

For the week of Aug. 1, 2005

Beliefs
? Trinity
Salvation by Grace
Authority of Bible
Personal God
Identity in Christ
Church
Humanity
Compassion
Eternity
Stewardship
Practices
Worship
Prayer
Bible Study
Single-mindedness
Biblical Community
Spiritual Gifts
Giving My Time
Giving My Money
Giving My Faith
Giving My Life
Virtues
Love
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness/Goodness
Faithfulness
Gentleness
Self-Control
Hope
Humility
Forgiveness

You Are Here!

“People come from all over the world to see it, but I would have been just as happy to stay away. On the edge of Minneapolis, in the United States, is a shopping center so vast that there is room for an entire fun-fair in the middle of it. The center is called, ‘The Mall of America’. People who like shopping love the Mall. You can spend all day – no, all week – there, and not visit the same shop twice. You can also, of course, spend all your money there, and many people do. But I’m not a great shopper. I went there to buy a pair of shoes and almost at once I got lost.

Fortunately, there were maps on nearly every corner. I spotted one and lurched towards it. It swam before my eyes. How could I make sense of it? Then, at last, I saw the little red blob which meant, ‘You Are Here’. At last I could get things in focus and find my way.

Paul is aware, I think, that the poem he’s just set out in verses 15 –20 is quite overpowering. Many ordinary Christians might read it, or hear it read out loud, and think, ‘Well, that sounds impressive, but what’s in it for me?’ So at once he brings things into focus. This section might be headed, ‘You Are Here’. If the poem is like a map of the entire cosmos, the whole story of creation and redemption, the present verses indicate where the ordinary Christian is located on the map.” Tom Wright

Monday – The Reconciler

The Jesus through whom the world was made in the first place is the same Jesus through whom the world has now been redeemed.

Tom Wright – *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*

Please read Colossians 1:15-23.

Text Insight – Most theologians agree that verses 15-20 represent a popular poem or song used by the early church. Paul is stating it here to make a point. Verses 21-23 help us to learn how that poem/song relates to us. (see above introduction)

1. How do you think verses 21-23 relate to the poem or song that Paul has quoted in verses 15-20?
2. Verse 20 acts as a bridge between the two sections. How would you write verse 20 in your own words?
3. How does Jesus’ work of creating relate to his work of reconciliation?
4. How have you seen Jesus at work in your life both creating and reconciling?

Tuesday – Restoration of all Things

How wondrous this will be! Creation can be so breathtaking now. What shall it be like when it is released to its full glory?

John Eldredge – *The Journey of Desire*

Please read Colossians 1:20-23 (focus on verse 20) and Romans 8:18-23.

1. Look at verse 20 of Colossians 1 and note the phrase, “reconcile to himself all things.” According to Paul, Jesus’ reconciling work extends beyond humanity. How far does it extend?
2. What impact has our sin had on “the creation?” (see Romans 8)
3. When Christ’s reconciling work is completed, what will happen to the creation? What will happen to mankind?

4. Knowing that our world is still fallen and we await liberation from bondage and decay, what do you look forward to the most about our new life in the new heaven and new earth?

Wednesday – Outsiders!

The first thing Paul says is: not too long ago, you weren’t on the map at all! God’s great purposes for the world were going ahead, and you were in the cold! You were excluded....

Tom Wright

Please read Colossians 1:20-23.

1. What does verse 21 say about our alienation from God? How severe was it?
2. What does this verse say about our “thinking” when we were alienated from God?

Text Insight – When Paul says we were enemies of God in our minds (see verse 21), he is saying we had lost the ability to think clearly about life and reality. We were distorted in our thinking. The **Message** Paraphrase says: *At one time you all had your backs turned to God, thinking rebellious thoughts of him, giving him trouble every chance you got.*

3. Why is it important for us as believers to be reminded of our state before we met Christ? How does knowing about your former alienation make a difference in how you live your life today?

Thursday – Enemies of God

The Fall is simply and solely Disobedience – doing what you have been told not to do: and it results from Pride – from being too big for your boots, forgetting your place, thinking that you are God. CS Lewis – A Preface to *Paradise Lost*

Please read Colossians 1:21 and Romans 5:6-11.

1. It has been said that “we don’t know how good the Good News is until we know how bad the Bad News was.” How bad was the bad news?
2. What words in Romans 5 does Paul use to describe us before we were reconciled to Christ?
3. What does it mean to be an enemy of someone? Why does Paul say that at one time we were God’s enemies?

en-e-my *n.* - One who feels hatred toward, intends injury to, or opposes the interests of another; a foe.

4. What kind of love does it take to die for someone who has postured himself as an enemy against you?

Friday – Reconciled!

rec-on-cile *v.* - To reestablish a close relationship between.

Please read Colossians 1:21-23 and Ephesians 2 (focusing on 17-22).

1. Have you ever known someone who reconciled an estranged relationship (e.g. husband and spouse)? What did it take to reestablish the relationship? What did it take for Christ to reestablish relationship with us?
2. What was the result according to Paul in Colossians 1 and Ephesians 2? What kind of words does Paul use to describe our new relationship with Christ?
3. In Ephesians 2 Paul uses a metaphor to describe how close we are in relationship to Christ. What metaphor did he use? Knowing he could have used lots of metaphors, why did he choose this one?
4. From enemy to family; is there any greater position Christ could have given us as a result of reconciliation? Close your time today in humble prayer for the “nearness” we have in Christ.

Saturday – What now?

... the effects of the gospel don’t happen automatically. Christians, who have come into this experience of being ushered into the presence of the holy God, can’t simply sit back and do nothing. They must ‘keep firmly on’; they must now take responsibility for their own growth to maturity in faith. Tom Wright

Please read Colossians 1:20-23.

1. Paul says “This is the Gospel” in verse 23. What description of the Gospel is he referring to? Is *continuing on in your faith* part of the Gospel to which Paul refers?
2. Why is this an essential part of our salvation experience (that we “continue in [our] faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel”)?
3. What does Paul mean when he says that the Gospel “has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven”?
4. Tom Wright explains, “*He can only mean that when Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead, as king and Lord of the world, a kind of spiritual shock wave ran right through the entire cosmos.*” Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

Book Recommendation: Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters by Tom Wright



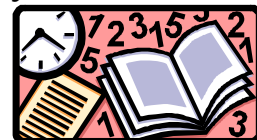
Homegroup Discussion

This section is designed for Home Groups and Small Groups who would like to discuss the Scrolls together. Begin by reading Colossians 1:20-23 and the opening introduction, “You are here!”

1. How do you think verses 21-23 relate to the poem that Paul has quoted in verses 15-20?
2. What does verse 21 say about our alienation from God? How severe was it? What does this verse say about our “thinking” when we were alienated from God? For further insight, read the “text insight” found under Wednesday’s section.
3. It has been said that “we don’t know how good the Good News is until we know how bad the Bad News was.” How bad was the bad news?
4. What does it mean to be an enemy of someone? Why does Paul say that at one time we were God’s enemies? What kind of love does it take to die for someone who has postured himself as an enemy to you?
5. What kind of words does Paul use to describe our new relationship with Christ?
6. Take time as a group to thank God for his great gift given us in Christ.

Family Time with Kids

Families can use these kid-friendly questions to help your children learn what you studied this week. Begin by reading Colossians 1:20-23



- 1) After brainstorming, make a list of six things that might tempt you and your friends to disobey God.
- 2) How do you feel when you disobey God? a) happy to get away it b) sad about not being perfect c) scared of getting caught or d) don’t really think about it.
- 3) Could you keep from disobeying God for a whole week (10,080 minutes)? Would it be easy or hard? Why?
- 4) When did sin begin (Hint: Read Genesis 3)?
- 5) Is there any way to undo disobedience? Explain. Read Romans 6:23 to find out what price has to be paid for sin, and read Colossians 1:20-21 to see what God did so that we don’t have to pay for our sins. (You might need to look up the word reconciliation in the dictionary) Unscramble these words: nlp a ot cclreieon
- 6) From Colossians 1:22b, God’s purpose is for you to be : a) holy in His sight b) without blemish c) free from accusation d) all the above?

Digging deeper: There is proof that God has a reconciliation plan. It is your faith in Jesus. If you have not placed your faith in him, consider doing it today. If you have already done this, write down two new ways you are going to be living proof of God’s plan (reading the bible, going to Sunday school, or talking to others about Jesus).